

Talking points  
The Challenge of Change  
Yazoo City Chamber of Commerce  
Thursday, December 6, 2007

I want to talk to you tonight about the thing too many of us fear most: That thing is change.

We shouldn't fear change; some argue that in order to be successful in life, we have to accept the fact that everything around us changes all the time.

That's a sound argument; the fact is, resistance to change is a dead-end street

Businessmen and women talk about having to adapt to economic changes and be ready to "turn on a dime" if they want to keep their product or service in the marketplace

The old cliché says change seems to be the only constant thing on earth

Velocity of change increasing at rapid rate

Like it or not, we must adapt to these changes and the only option we really have is to adapt by moving forward

No longer business as usual

Americans may not be comfortable with change, but we can deal with it

We're better able to change than anyone else

Raised thinking wealth was land

But too many people today are not doing as well as they could be because they are leaving wealth in the land instead of taking that money out and investing it in something else

We must find the highest and best use of our God-given talents and our God-given resources

In state government, we're entering period of flat budgets, with only a 2.9% increase expected in revenue in the next fiscal year

That's less than the amount of spending that will carry over into next year

Due to that flat revenue projection, I've directed state agency heads to prepare 2009 budgets that are 2% and 5% less than this year's budgets

Ironically, this comes at a time of record economic growth in Mississippi

The spike in Katrina-related sales taxes has leveled off, but I expect record employment and job growth to continue because many of those jobs are already in the pipeline

Most jobs created in the Mississippi economy these days are in the services sector, not manufacturing.

That's not to say we should desert manufacturing, it's just to illustrate the importance of change

We've got to take a look at how to improve our principal resource, which is our people

Our destiny rests in our own hands but we cannot rest in its pursuit

We have to change our way of looking at things

Begin to judge not by how much money goes into a program but on the real results at the end of the day, especially in fields like education and workforce training

We can't run away from problems

We can wrap our arms around them and do what needs to be done to allow our children to come home – or stay here in Mississippi – because that's where the best jobs are

Communities should also embrace change to make the places we live better

Every town has strengths; every town has weaknesses

But every one of you has the ability to help improve your community by taking advantage of comparative advantages that can positively influence every sector of life

The outcomes can be spectacular, but good things rarely come easy

The challenge is to get past the “same old, same old” and think creatively about the kind of community we want

If we are to be successful in the future, we must begin to think that way

Change comes to every aspect of life.

Our challenge is to adapt to it and manage change for the better, not let change itself dictate the future path of our communities and state

